

WORKING TOGETHER FOR MONTANA'S FUTURE



“Economic development and business expansion is a top priority of my administration. When a person has a good paying job they are able to take care of themselves and their families and enjoy the best Montana has to offer.”

Governor Brian Schweitzer



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Business Resources Division is to assist the businesses and communities of Montana in achieving economic prosperity.

Director: Anthony J. Preite

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www.businessresources.mt.gov
www.mtfinanceonline.com
www.business.mt.gov

MICROBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

Montana has a network of regional MicroBusiness Development Corporations (MBDCs) that provide financing, training, and business assistance to help very small businesses expand or get started. Applicants generally must provide a business plan and other evidence to demonstrate the economic feasibility of the business and the ability to repay the loan from cash flow generated by the business. The intent of the program is to finance economically sound business projects that are not otherwise able to obtain financing from sources such as their local bank. Therefore, terms and conditions of each loan vary but the interest rates are generally slightly higher than bank rates. Refer to table on the back of this brochure for further details.

Montana Community Development Corp. (Missoula)

(406) 728-9234

Headwaters RC&D Area, Inc.(Butte)

(406) 782-7333

Gateway Economic Development Corp.(Helena)

(406) 447-1510

Bear Paw Development Corp.(Havre)

(406) 265-9226

Great Northern Development Corp. (Wolf Point)

(406) 653-2590

ENTREPRENEUR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Entrepreneur Development Program offers business management education courses in communities throughout Montana through the Small Business Development Center network. Utilizing the NxLevelL Entrepreneur curriculum, classroom training is offered to business owners who are growing their companies and to individuals serious about starting their own business. Certified business professionals who have strong connections with the local community teach the courses. Over thirteen weeks, individuals learn planning, marketing and financial tools to build their businesses. Additional information regarding the program, business tools and classroom sites may be found at:
<http://www.nxlevelmontana.org>.

The program supports the development of entrepreneurial networks by working with the Small Business Development Centers and their host organizations. The program is very active on the Indian Reservations in Montana by supporting classroom training, counseling, and individualized technical assistance for the Tribes. Contact: (406) 721-3663

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

Existing, start-up and entrepreneurial businesses can find confidential free business technical assistance, counseling and low-cost training through a network of ten statewide offices. Businesses can find assistance for business plan writing, marketing, management and financial analysis at Small Business Development Center (SBDC) offices located in local economic development organizations. The SBDC is supported through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Dept. of Commerce and local host organizations. The SBDC offices provide an access point to local, state and federal business resources, as well as networking and mentoring opportunities.

For general information, call (406) 841-2747, email: mtsbdc@mt.gov, or visit: <http://www.sbdc.mt.gov>

SBDC Subcenter Locations

Big Sky Economic Development Authority - Billings 406-254-6014

Gallatin Development Corporation - Bozeman 406-587-3113

Southwest Montana Headwaters RC&D - Butte 406-782-7333

Southeastern Montana Development Corporation - Colstrip
406-748-2990

Great Falls Development Authority - Great Falls 406-453-8834

Bear Paw Development Corporation - Havre 406-265-4945

Gateway Economic Development Corporation - Helena
406-447-1512

Kalispell Area Chamber of Commerce - Kalispell
406-758-2802

Montana Community Development Corporation - Missoula
406-728-9234

Upon request, this publication will be made available in an alternative accessible format.

BOARD OF RESEARCH AND COMMERCIALIZATION TECHNOLOGY

The Board of Research and Commercialization Technology was created by the 1999 Montana Legislature to provide: a predictable and stable source of funding for research and commercialization projects; expand and strengthen research efforts for the state's basic industries to increase their economic impact on the state's economy; and expand research efforts into areas beyond the scope of the state's basic industries to diversify and strengthen the state's economic security through the creation of technology-based operations and long-term quality jobs.

The Board has the authority to make grants or loans to research and commercialization centers. Projects must have the potential to diversify or add value to a traditional basic industry of the state's economy, and show promise for enhancing technology-based sectors or commercial development of discoveries.

Contact: (406) 841-2760

CENSUS AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION CENTER

The Census and Economic Information Center (CEIC), the official source of census data for Montana, provides a comprehensive economic and demographic information resource for department, businesses, community groups, government, educators/schools, and families. In addition, CEIC is Montana's lead agency for the federal-state cooperative State Data Center (SDC) and Business/Industry Data Center (BIDC) programs with the U.S. Census Bureau. As the SDC lead, CEIC supports a statewide 29-member network. CEIC also provides access to and education on using Census data and other federal and state statistical resources, as well as supporting a special library collection of historical and current census documents in print and electronic format.

CEIC offers a variety of mapping, geographic, and GIS (geographic information system) data and services. We provide assistance to identify, acquire, and use data in a GIS; act as a clearinghouse of data and maps from the Census Bureau and other agencies; and provide technical assistance to develop GIS applications related to demographic and socioeconomic needs.

Contact: (406) 841-2740 <http://www.ceic.mt.gov>

INTERNATIONAL AND TRADE RELATIONS

The Bureau provides information and technical assistance to help Montanans pursue business opportunities, both domestically and worldwide. Export trade and marketing specialists provide consultation and training for companies to successfully compete in new markets. The Bureau highlights Montana made products via an Online Products directory as well as promotes the use of "Made In Montana" labels to identify Montana products. It also offers a trade show assistance program. Overseas trade offices are maintained in Taipei, Taiwan and Kumamoto, Japan to promote agriculture, tourism, value-added products, and higher education opportunities to markets in East Asia. The Bureau also serves as the protocol and international liaison for the Governor's Office and the Department of Commerce. Contact: (406) 841-2757

SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH (SBIR) AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER RESEARCH (STTR) FUNDING

The SBIR/STTR outreach program identifies and assists Montana companies applying for research and development grants from eleven federal agencies. The Small Business Innovation Development Act obligates federal agencies with extensive extramural research budgets to allocate a portion to the SBIR program.

Nationwide, the SBIR program has provided extensive grants (more than \$1 billion) designed to stimulate true technological innovation and bring new high-risk products and services to market. Emphasis is on commercialization. Grants are designed to support feasibility studies, and prototype development/testing. The STTR program, similar to SBIR, involves only the five largest federal agency extramural research budgets, and mandates participation by a non-profit research institution such as a university. Goals for the Montana Department of Commerce SBIR/STTR outreach program are to secure portions of available funding for Montana companies and expand Montana's economic base. For more information regarding SBIR contact: (406) 841-2749 <http://www.sbir.mt.gov>

FINANCE INFORMATION CENTER

The 57th Legislature created the Finance Information Center in the Montana Department of Commerce. The purpose was to provide a source of information on all relevant state, federal, and local public finance programs in Montana. The Department of Commerce created the Finance Information Center through the reorganization of existing resources. The Finance Information Center includes the Regional Development Program (please see insert page), which provides direct technical assistance from the Center to citizens interested in accessing these and other finance programs in Montana.

One aspect of the Center was the development of a web site dedicated to providing information on public finance programs in Montana. The Finance Information Center has created and released the website, which provides a one-stop reference source for virtually all state, federal and local development based finance and technical assistance programs.

Contact: (406) 841-2732 www.mtfinanceonline.com

COMMERCE LOAN & DEVELOPMENT FUND

This Commerce program utilizes federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to stimulate economic development activity by assisting the private sector to create or retain jobs for low and moderate income persons primarily through loans to businesses. Commerce grant funding is also available to companies for employee training and infrastructure. The program is designed to assist businesses by making fixed-rate financing available to them at reasonable interest rates, given the risk of the project, and to provide public improvements in support of economic development activities.

Commerce funds are intended to be used in situations where a funding gap exists and alternative sources of public and private financing are not adequate. Commerce provides flexibility in interest rates and loan terms to complement conventional business financing and other federal business financing programs. CDBG funding can provide payment deferments, lower payments in the first year and interest-only payments. Contact: (406) 841-2733

COMMERCE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

Montana is divided into five regions with a Regional Development Officer (RDO) assigned to each area as a representative of the Montana Department of Commerce.

The RDOs live and travel extensively in their regions and are a resource to businesses, local development corporations and communities in the area. The program serves as an access point to all relevant Commerce Department resources, and all other relevant business and community development resources.

The primary purpose of this Finance Information Center program is to provide technical assistance to businesses for the purpose of obtaining financing for start-ups, expansions, business locations from out of state, and retention projects. RDOs work with all available business finance resources such as those found on the spreadsheet in this publication.

A map of the regions in Montana can be obtained by calling (406) 841-2730, or by viewing the RDO website at:

http://businessresources.mt.gov/BRD_RDO.asp

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

Northwest Montana
Charlie Wright
Missoula (406) 532-3222

Northcentral Montana
Randy Hanson
Havre (406) 262-9579

Eastern Montana
Tod Kasten
Circle (406) 485-3374

Southwest Montana
Terry Dimock
Helena (406) 841-2737

Southcentral Montana
Al Jones
Billings (406) 655-1696

MONTANA MAIN STREET PROGRAM

Created by the 2005 legislature and established in July 2005, the Montana Main Street program is a common sense, community driven approach that assists communities in revitalizing their historic downtown business districts. Its primary function is to provide technical expertise to establish and strengthen revitalization projects and address specific redevelopment issues in cities and towns.

The Department of Commerce selects a limited number of communities each year to participate in the program. These communities benefit from specific expertise tailored to fit their community redevelopment needs. At the same time, general assistance is available to communities statewide that are undertaking revitalization efforts. The program provides hands-on assistance, and serves as a full-time advocate and development resource to communities. It promotes a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and rebuilding of historic commercial districts. Contact: (406) 841-2756

WORKFORCE TRAINING GRANTS (WTG)

The Primary Sector Workforce Training Act provides funding for employee training needs in expanding primary sector industries in Montana to encourage the creation of good-paying jobs. The program established by the act is administered by the Department of Commerce. A seven-member Grant Review Committee, consisting of both public and private members, makes grant award decisions. The grant review committee may award workforce training grants of up to \$5,000 per eligible net new employee to primary sector businesses that provide education or skills-based training, through eligible training providers. The Montana Department of Labor and Industry (MDOLI) maintains an eligible training provider list.

A company must create at least ten new eligible jobs that pay wages and benefits of at least the lower of the average county wage or average state wage. Annually, there is a maximum of \$1.3 million available for workforce training grants for eligible Montana companies. Contact: (406) 841-2736

BIG SKY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND

The Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund was created by the 2005 Montana Legislature and was one of the major components of Governor Brian Schweitzer's 2005 legislative agenda. The Trust Fund was created to aide in the development of good-paying jobs for Montana residents and promote long-term, stable economic growth in Montana.

Trust Fund earnings are estimated to be about \$1.35 million initially and will increase annually. Of that amount 75% is awarded annually to local governments in the form of grants and loans for economic development projects that create new qualifying jobs for Montana residents. Awards may be made for up to \$5,000 per job that pays at a minimum the average wage for the county the project is located in.

The remaining 25% of the trust fund earnings available annually is granted to Certified Regional Development Corporations and other eligible applicants for support for business improvement districts and central business district redevelopment; industrial development; feasibility studies; creation and maintenance of baseline community profiles; and matching funds for federal funds. Contact: (406) 841-2758

CERTIFIED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

The 2003 Montana Legislature created the Certified Regional Development Corporations (CRDC) program. The legislative intent of the CRDC program is to encourage a regional approach to economic development that facilitates the efficient delivery of economic development programs by supporting regional capacity building.

CRDC's are responsible for helping local officials, communities and businesses "assess, plan, and facilitate action" within their regions. CRDC's are required to have the support of all counties and a majority of the incorporated cities and towns in their region to obtain and maintain certification. CRDC's receive regional capacity building grants from the Dept. of Commerce on an annual basis. To contact the CRDC in your region visit: http://businessresources.mt.gov/BRD_CRDC.asp or contact the Department of Commerce at (406) 841-2758.

MONTANA MANUFACTURING EXTENSION CENTERS (MMEC)

The Department of Commerce works closely with MMEC engineers under a cooperative agreement. MMEC engineers are located in Missoula, Bozeman, Billings, Kalispell, and Helena. They provide technical assistance on a wide variety of areas important to manufacturers in Montana such as: facility layout; efficiency studies; process improvement; marketing; quality systems; product costing and much more. The MMEC program is part of the MT State University, College of Engineering Center and is affiliated with the National Institute of Standards and Technology. For additional information call 1(800) MEP-4MFG.